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ABSTRACT

A needs assessment survey was conducted by Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, to provide meaningful planning for further ESAP programs. A questionnaire was administered to all teachers, principals and central office staff and was sent, via students, to a random sample of parents. Consensus of the respondents was that pupil services represents the most critical need of Jefferson Parish Schools. The areas of personnel, instructional materials, and school-community relations were also of major concern to one or more groups in the study. The development or improvement of curriculum content represented a strong concern by several groups, but not a first-priority item by any group. Personnel was a first-priority item by one group of respondents, was tied for last with another, and was tied for next-to-last by another. The second portion of the study showed that dropouts and/or potential dropouts and preschool, early childhood pupils were the target populations having the most critical needs. Handicapped pupils and those having unequal educational opportunities were identified as the next most critical populations. Some support was given to the target population concerned with the environmental conflict, principally as the second most critical need area. (For related document, see TM 002 966.) (KM)

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JEFFERSON PARISH SCHOOLS
ESAP
NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

SPRING, 1972
JEFFERSON PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM
JEFFERSON PARISH, LOUISIANA
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The Survey Procedures

In order to provide meaningful planning for further ESAP programs, a Comprehensive Planning Committee was established to make a needs assessment of the educational system in Jefferson Parish. Committee members were selected by Area One and Three Superintendents, Mr. Joseph Martina and Mr. Sidney Montet. All members were approved by the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Peter C. Bertucci. The committee met several times in March and April to discuss the means by which samples for the questionnaire would be selected and the actual methods of distribution. It was decided that all teachers and Principals in the parish would be given a chance to respond to the survey. To accomplish this goal, each committee member was given a group of schools to visit, and administer the survey to school staff members at a faculty meeting. The survey was also sent to the Central Office Staff. Copies of the Needs Assessment survey were given to the eleven division heads, who were responsible for its distribution and collection.

It was also important to gather the reactions of parents to the Needs Assessment Survey. To achieve a large random sample, students were selected from language arts classes in the various parish schools. These students took the questionnaire home for their parents to fill out and then returned them to their teachers. Members of the Planning Committee collected the surveys from the school principals. The results were then compiled and analyzed by Dr. William F. Smith, Dr. John Ray, and Mrs. Dee Allen. (Results are available in the appendix) A detailed summary of these results follows.

Results of the Needs Assessment of Jefferson Parish Schools reported in these analyses deal with those items which were identified as part of the system-wide survey conducted during the late Spring, 1972. These data represent input from Teachers, Principals, Central Staff Members, and Parents from Jefferson Parish. No attempt should be made to infer that the total needs of the district were covered by this survey -- especially those concerned with the previously determined need for a major building program. This assessment is but one integral part of a total look at the schools of Jefferson Parish. A copy of the current survey instrument is included as Appendix A.

Categorizations of respondents made for this report include Elementary Teacher, Middle School Teacher, Secondary School Teacher, Elementary School Principal, Middle School Principal, Secondary School Principal, Parent, and Central Staff Member. While all analyses are reported in terms of percentages, respondent totals by category and numbers responding are reported in summary tables found in Appendix B. Responses to each question asked on the survey form (Appendix A) are presented in these tables.

The first major procedure for examining the needs assessment data is based on the selection of Critical Need Areas by the various groups. For example, it was found that Item 4, Pupil Services, was identified as the most critical need by four groups -- Elementary Teachers, Secondary Teachers, Middle School Teachers, and Central Staff Members. Item 2, Personnel, was selected as the most critical need by Elementary Principals and Parents; while Item 5, Instructional Materials, was identified as the most critical need by Secondary Principals; and Item 6, School-Community Relations, was identified as the most critical need by Middle School

Principals.

In addition to ranking first in responses from four groups, Item 4 was ranked second most important in terms of percentage response by Elementary Principals, Middle School Principals, and Parents. Secondary Principals ranked Item 4, Pupil Services, in a tie between third and fourth. Therefore, Item 4 was ranked either first or second by seven of the eight groups selected for study and in a tie for third by the eighth group. Item 5, Instructional Materials, identified as first priority by Secondary Principals, was identified as second or in a tie for second by Elementary Teachers and Middle School Teachers, and third or in a tie for third by Secondary Teachers, Middle School Teachers, Elementary Principals, and Parents. Item 7, Development or Improvement of Curriculum Content, was identified as the second most important item by Secondary Teachers and in a tie for second place with Instructional Materials by Middle School Teachers. This item was identified as third priority by Elementary Teachers, by Middle School Principals, and by Central Staff. It was ranked in a tie for third by Middle School Teachers and Secondary School Principals. The items which received the lowest percentage response from the eight categorization groups were Item 6 and Item 8. Item 6, School-Community Relations, ranked lowest in percentage by Secondary Teachers, Elementary Principals, and in a tie for this position by Secondary Principals. Item 8 ranked lowest in percentage by Middle School Teachers and Parents. This item had to do with the Development or Improvement of Curriculum Methodology. Item 1, Educational Goals, was ranked lowest by Elementary Teachers; Item 3, Pupil Progress Procedures, was ranked lowest by Middle School Principals, and by Central Staff; while

Item 2, Personnel, was ranked in a tie for last by Secondary Principals.

In analyzing these particular data, it is imperative that an examination be made of the Specific Needs identified for each Critical Need Area (refer to Appendix A). For example, when each of the Specific Needs relative to each Critical Need Area was examined, in every instance "Equal need: All or more than one" received the largest percentage response. In essence, this indicates that all facets of a particular Critical Need Area such as Pupil Services was viewed as needing improvement rather than one facet being singled out as most significant. In looking at the item dealing with Curriculum Content, the Elementary Teachers gave a 29.3 percent response of "Equal need: All or more than one" that all subjects needed improvement. No individual subject under Curriculum Content ranked higher than 8.9 percent. Individual areas of Language Arts and Communications received a rank of 8.9 percent, while Vocational-Technical Improvement received a rank of 8.5 percent. In responses to Development or Improvement of Curriculum Methodology, Item 8, 19.3 percent of this group indicated that improvement in "All Subjects" was of most importance with no individual subject area ranking above 4.9 percent. Again, Language Arts and Communications and Vocational-Technical subjects headed the list.

The second facet of the Needs Assessment Survey included a selection of the most critical needs of the target population. The respondents were asked to mark "1" under the item which was the most critical need and "2" for the next most critical. (See Appendix A). Again, the respondents were categorized into groups as Elementary Teachers, Secondary Teachers, Middle School Teachers, Elementary Principals, Middle School Principals, Secondary Principals, Parents, and Central Staff Members.

The areas for consideration as critical needs were Unequal Educational Opportunity, Dropouts and Potential Dropouts, Pre-school and Early Childhood, Handicapped, Environmental Conflict, and Other. The analysis was made in terms of response of most critical, "1," or next most critical, "2."

Item 3, Pre-school and Early Childhood, was identified as the first priority need or most critical need by Elementary Teachers, Elementary Principals, Parents, and Central Staff, and tied for first in the ranking by Middle School Principals. Item 2, Dropouts and Potential Dropouts, was ranked as the first critical need by Secondary Teachers, Middle School Teachers, and Secondary Principals. Item 1, Unequal Educational Opportunities, was tied with Item 3 as the most important item by Middle School Teachers and was tied for second on categorizations by Secondary Teachers, Middle School Principals, and Secondary Principals. Item 2, Dropouts and Potential Dropouts, received the second highest percentage by Parents; while Item 4, Handicapped, received the second largest percentage by Elementary Principals and Elementary Teachers and was tied for this position by Central Staff Member responses. Item 1, Unequal Educational Opportunity, was ranked in a tie for second by Middle School Principals, and Central Staff Members. Item 5, Environmental Conflict, was ranked second in terms of highest percentage response by Secondary Teachers and Secondary Principals.

The item receiving the highest tallies in terms of being ranked as a "2" was Item 2, Dropouts and Potential Dropouts. Secondary Teachers, Secondary Principals, and Parents ranked the item first in this category. Item 3, Pre-school and Early Childhood, was ranked second most important

by Elementary Teachers, Middle School Teachers, and Central Staff Members; Item 5, Environmental Conflict, was ranked first by Middle School Teachers and Elementary School Principals.

Summary

Without question, the participants in the Jefferson Parish Needs Assessment Survey viewed the area of Pupil Services as a paramount critical need within the parish. The areas of Personnel, Instructional Materials, and School-Community Relations were other areas of major concern expressed by one or more groups in the study. The Development or Improvement of Curriculum Content represented a strong concern by several groups, although not a first priority item by any group. It is interesting to note that the item on Personnel was a first priority item by one group of respondents, tied for last with another, and tied for next to last by another.

Major consensus was that Pupil Services represents the most critical need of Jefferson Parish Schools.

The second portion of the study showed that Dropouts and/or Potential Dropouts and Pre-school, Early Childhood Pupils were the target populations having the most critical needs. Handicapped Pupils and pupils having Unequal Educational Opportunities were identified as the next most critical populations. Some support was offered for the target population concerned with the Environmental Conflict, but this was principally in the "second" most critical need area.